



HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence

“Combating Transnational Gangs Through Information Sharing”

January 18, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) are a serious and growing threat to the American people. They disregard the rule of law of all nations and use their networks to smuggle drugs, and traffic human beings for sexual exploitation and slave labor.

They resort to brutal violence and intimidation tactics to carry out their illegal deeds. These networks of vile individuals, and gangs like MS-13, have been known to kidnap, torture, and behead their victims. The top officials at DHS are very alarmed by their actions.

Before becoming White House Chief of Staff, Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly explained to a national security forum last July that one of his top concerns is a partnership between TCO's and international terror groups.

If such alliances were formed, terrorists would have an easier time sneaking a dirty bomb or other catastrophic weapons and resources into the United States.

Further, in written testimony before our Full Committee back in November, Acting Secretary Duke stated that TCO's are “bringing drugs, violence, and dangerous goods across our borders...they pose a persistent national security threat to the United States.”

Unfortunately, some of these partnerships are starting to take hold. Recent reports have shown that Hezbollah has been very active in recent years with international drug cartels in Latin America.

We cannot allow such dangers to gather in our hemisphere unchallenged.

The ability of TCO's secreting terrorists and WMD into our country is a grave threat. And this Committee is going to undertake a thorough review of these possibilities so that we can prevent them from happening. Sadly, these TCO's have an easy time infiltrating our communities because the security of our southern border is just not strong enough to stop them. Hopefully, we will soon be able to fix that.

Legislation I introduced to strengthen border security with new infrastructure including a wall, more boots on the ground, and new technology, was passed out of our full Committee in October.

Last week, that important legislation was incorporated into a larger bill to fix our broken immigration system.

I am hoping we can pass it through Congress and get it to the President's desk very soon. All three branches of government working together is essential in this fight, but we must also create and foster partnerships with governments in Latin America help eliminate threats from TCO's.

One of the most important lessons we learned from the 9/11 attacks is that we must effectively communicate vital information among federal departments and law enforcement agencies. Doing so will save many innocent lives.

Today's witnesses represent hardworking men and women from the FBI, ICE, and the State Department, who work very hard for the protection of their fellow Americans. I'd like to thank each of you for being here.

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